CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. M. G. K. MENON) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Government have decided to set up a demonstration irradiation facility for spices at Cochin.

(b) No Sir. The Government are not aware of any moratorium on irradiated foods in Australia. Our information is that the issue is presently under the Australian Government's consideration. In Japan irradiated food is being used. However, imports are not allowed because Japan does not feel assured of the reliability of regulation and control procedures in irradiation in other countries.

(c) While there is no universal method suitable for detection of all the irradiated foods, methods are available for detection in specific items like spices etc. It is a fact that irradiation for preservation does not produce any radioactivity in the food. In fact this is one of the reasons that it is difficult to distinguish irradiated food.

(d) Irradiation Plants use very high intensity Gamma radiation source. They are generally licensed by national regulatory bodies and are registered by IAEA. Products irradiated in such plants are usually pre-packed and labelled so that the consumer is aware of what he is buying. These regulations have been arrived at by international consultations under WHO and IAEA. Code of practice for irradiation has been promulgated by Codes Alimentarius Commission.

India does not import fast decaying food items like Potatoes and Onions. The dose of irradiation of grains is limited to 25 kilo rads and are accepted as safe by International Commission. Irradiation is an expensive process and there is no incentive to irradiate beyond this limit from a commercial point of view. Therefore it is unlikely that grains will be imported into this country which have been excessively irradiated. Since import is restricted to Government agencies, the source is well known and the processes of packing and delivery are also known to the importing organisations. Care taken by the latter in consultation with the Deptt. of Atomic Energy and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare can ensure that irradiated food likely to be harmful or rejected by other countries is not dumped into this country. In any case, Government will not agree to such imports because of heavy discounts.

Clearance of power projects from the environmental angle

@1830-B. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are evolving a standard rehabilitation package to help quick clearance of power projects from the environmental angle;

(b) if so, what are the details of the power projects which have not been cleared from the environmental angle; and

(c) by when these power projects are likely be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI (MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Thirty power projects are pending for environmental clearance as on 1st March, 1990. The details are given in the Annexure. [*See* Appendix CLIII, Annexure No. 77.]

(c) The project proposals will be considered for a decision from environmental angle within three months, from the date of submission of complete information to this Ministry.

@Previously Unstarred Question 1588 transferred from the 26th March, 1990.